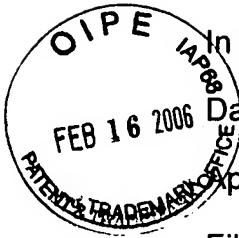


**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**



In re Patent Application of

Darko Pervan

Application No.: 10/730,131

Filed: December 9, 2003

For: FLOORBOARDS, FLOORING  
SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR  
MANUFACTURING AND  
INSTALLATION THEREOF

) **Mail Stop RCE**

) **Group Art Unit: 3635**

) **Examiner: Basil S. Katcheves**

) **Confirmation No.: 3197**

**DECLARATION OF GERHARD SCHULTZE**

Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

I, Gerhard Schultze, hereby declare that:

I worked for the Perstorp AB from 1976 to 1991;

I was responsible for development of laminate products and for special types of compact laminate. As Project Manager I invented the first laminate flooring in the world in 1977. The size was then 1,2 x 0,2 m and this has been the standard size since that time;

I have reviewed US Patent Application Serial No. 10/730,131;

Prior to the invention in US Patent Application Serial No. 10/730,131, the thinking in the industry was that laminate floorboards should be made of a relatively large size for at least three reasons:

- (1) in order to reduce the saw cuts and waste in connection with the machining of the locking systems as much as possible,
- (2) it was thought that the a floor of larger boards could be installed faster than a floor of smaller boards because there would be fewer boards to install, and

(3) a floor comprising large sized panels with few joints has a considerable cost advantage over a floor with many smaller sized panels, since the production capacity is considerable larger when producing large sized panels;

With traditional large-sized patterned laminate floorboards, there were problems that the printed patterns that simulate small blocks did not line up when the boards were installed;

It has been surprisingly found that, in spite of the well-known advantages of the larger boards, there are actually many, previously unappreciated advantages of using a larger number of smaller boards. For example:

(1) small floorboards provide an improved imitation of a classically patterned parquet flooring, since the joints will be consistent with the parquet blocks and not exhibit any pattern offsets or 'additional joints';

(2) flooring which comprises small floorboards can be installed almost as quickly and with the same quality as traditional flooring comprising considerably larger floorboards, and even faster if a mechanical locking system is used with only a "hook" at the short edges, such installation could be made with a simple angling only and without any tools;

(3) small floorboards are easier to handle than the larger boards;

(4) because the sides are shorter in the smaller boards and there is less friction when sliding two adjacent connecting boards;

(5) since the actual connecting elements are proportionately smaller in smaller boards, there is less friction in connection with angling and there is less material to bend when e.g. making a snap connection than in installations when larger floorboards are used;



(6) small boards are easier to cut and install near walls than large boards;

(7) small boards are less inclined to warp and bend in humid environments than the larger boards and the "banana shape problem", which is a major disadvantage with larger floorboards, could be almost completely eliminated ; and

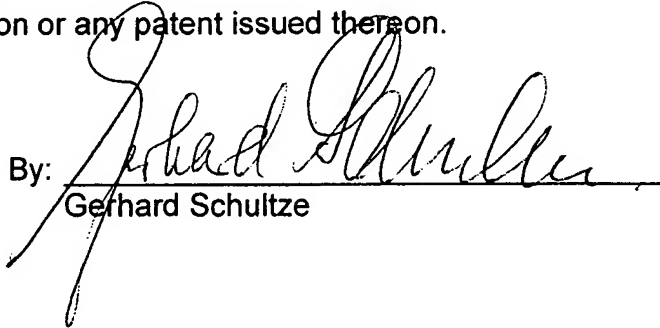
(8) small boards have more joints per unit area and this will release tension much more during expansion and shrinking than in the case when large boards are used;

(9) small boards are easier to transport than the larger boards; and

that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

Date: 02-14-2006

By:

  
Gerhard Schultze